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COORDINATION, PROGRAMME AND OTHER QUESTIONS: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF INFORMATICS

Draft resolution submitted by the President of the Council, on the basis of informal consultations

The need to harmonize and improve United Nations informatics systems for optimal utilization and accessibility by all States

The Economic and Social Council,

Conscious of the deep interest of Member States in harnessing the benefits of new information technologies for furthering the objectives of the United Nations, including the objectives of economic and social development,

Recalling its resolutions 1991/70 of 26 July 1991, 1992/60 of 31 July 1992, 1993/56 of 29 July 1993, 1994/46 of 29 July 1994, 1995/61 of 28 July 1995, 1996/35 of 25 July 1996 and 1997/1 of 18 July 1997 on the need to harmonize and improve United Nations information systems for optimal utilization and accessibility by all States, with due regard to all official languages,

Also recalling that in its resolution 1997/1 of 18 July 1997, it commended the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics for the concrete actions it had taken in pursuance of its mandate, and requested the President of the Economic and Social Council to convene the Working Group for one more year, from within existing resources, for the due fulfilment of the provisions of the Council resolutions on this item,

Welcoming the oral report presented by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics on the progress achieved so far by the Working Group in fulfilling its mandate,

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Highly appreciative of the accomplishments of the Working Group, which include:

(a) The distribution of a large number of computers under a technical assistance programme to enable the missions of the developing countries to overcome the difficulty of hardware availability;

(b) Informatics symposiums, which are working to build a strong collaboration among the United Nations, Member States and the private sector for the pursuit of common objectives;

(c) The programme of outreach from the United Nations to academic institutions through video-conferencing,

Welcoming General Assembly resolution A/52/233 of 17 June 1998, in which the Assembly emphasized the coordinated efforts by Governments and private, public and international organizations required to address the year 2000 problem,

Deeply appreciative that the work of the Working Group has not involved any additional expenditures, and that its needs have been met from within existing resources,

Highly appreciative that the work done by the Working Group has already resulted in savings for the United Nations and its Member States, and has created opportunities for further savings,

Taking note with deep interest of the proposed initiatives of the Working Group, including the promotion of computer-based decision-making techniques to facilitate the drafting of resolutions and documents in ways that would accelerate the reaching of agreements in the drafting process, and the employment of modern information technology for the development activities of the United Nations,

Recognizing that the work done by the Working Group will support and facilitate the successful implementation of the initiatives being taken by the Secretary-General with a view to expanding the use of information technology and the availability and transparency of information in order to further facilitate access to United Nations information in all countries,

Agreeing with the assessment in the report of the Working Group that further work needs to be done by the Working Group to fulfil its mandate,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on action taken by the United Nations to implement Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/1,[1]

1. Reiterates, once again, the high priority that it attaches to easy, economical, uncomplicated and unhindered access for States Members of the United Nations and for observers, through, inter alia, their permanent missions, to the

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[1] E/1998/44.

growing number of computerized databases and information systems and services of the United Nations;

2. Calls for the urgent and continued implementation of measures required to achieve these objectives;

3. Reaffirms the continuing need for representatives of States to be closely consulted and actively associated with the respective executive and governing bodies of United Nations institutions dealing with informatics within the United Nations system, so that the specific needs of States as internal end-users can be given due priority;

4. Decides that the action programme to harmonize and improve United Nations informatics systems for optimal utilization and accessibility by all States should continue to be implemented from within existing resources and in full consultation with the representatives of States;

5. Highly commends the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics for the concrete actions it has taken and for the impressive results it has produced in pursuance of its mandate;

6. Requests the President of the Economic and Social Council to convene the Working Group for one more year, from within existing resources, for the due fulfilment of the provisions of the Council resolutions on this item and for facilitating the successful implementation of the initiatives being taken by the Secretary-General with regard to use of information technology;

7. Emphasizes the need for global cooperation to ensure timely and effective response to the year 2000 challenge;

8. Requests the Working Group on Informatics to continue its work for an Information Management Strategy;

9. Requests the Secretary-General to extend full cooperation to the Working Group and to give priority to implementing its recommendations;

10. Also requests the Secretary-General to report to it at its substantive session of 1999 on the follow-up action taken on the present resolution, including the findings of the Working Group.